

## Student Participation in the IEP

IDEA requires that the school district invite the student with a disability to attend his or her IEP starting at age 16. This is even more important if the purpose of the meeting will be the consideration of the post-secondary goals for the student and the transition services needed to assist the student in reaching those goals.

Transition planning is about the student's movement from high school to post-school life. It is based on the student's plans for the future. The student may need preparation and practice in participating in the IEP meeting. The preference, interests, needs and strengths of the student are at the core of the planning process; therefore, the student's input is essential.

Students can provide input in various ways:

- ◆ Student input provided indirectly based on a questionnaire or survey,
- ◆ Reluctant participant (avoids conversation or responds only to direct questions).
- ◆ Student input provided directly by computer or electronic device.
- ◆ Self-advocate (practices self-advocacy skills).
- ◆ Leader (demonstrates leadership skills in the IEP).

When the student is invited, but does not attend the IEP Team meeting, the school district must take other steps to ensure that the student's preferences, interests, needs, and strengths are considered.

### T I P S

#### Ways students can be involved in the IEP process:

- ☑ Planning the IEP includes laying the foundation for the meeting by identifying strengths, needs, establishing goals, considering options, and preparing resources to use at the IEP meeting.
- ☑ Drafting the IEP provides practice in **self-advocacy skills** - includes having students write a draft of their IEP that reflects their strengths and needs as well as interests and preferences.
- ☑ Participating in the IEP Meeting: Demonstrate self-advocacy skills. Students have the opportunity to share interests, preferences, and needs; as well as participate in the process of developing the transition plan.
- ☑ Leading the IEP: Students have the opportunity to demonstrate self-advocacy and leadership skills.
- ☑ Implementing the IEP: Evaluate their own progress toward achieving goals. Have students track annual goal progress in an e-portfolio (i.e., Google Doc, WordPress).